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Business students benefit from FWSF scholarship program

A pair of Dominican business students – MBA student Ami Thomas and undergraduate Mekdi Yilma – recently received scholarships from Financial Women of San Francisco as part of FWSF's Scholarship Mentoring Program.

Ami and Mekdi were recognized along with nine other scholarship winners, including students from Stanford and UC Berkeley, at an FWSF award luncheon on June 4.

"The networking events and monthly mixers of FWSF present an incredible chance for me to acquire the skills to brand myself, ultimately getting one step closer to achieving my goal," says Mekdi, who will be a senior in the fall. "As it has been said numerous times, it's not what we know, but also who. I can already say I have met several accomplished women, whom I aspire to emulate, through the application process. Moreover, I intend to use this platform to advocate for women."

Ami says the scholarship is much more than a financial contribution toward her education.

"I've recognized for some time that I need to expand my network in the finance industry in order to continue growing, and ultimately be successful. This scholarship is a great opportunity to move closer to that goal," says Ami, who is currently pursuing the Chartered Financial Analyst Designation (CFA).

Ami is pursuing a dual concentration in Strategic Leadership and Global Business in the [Barowsky School of Business](#). She has been working in the financial industry for the past seven years and holds three licenses and an Accredited Asset Management Specialist designation (AAMS).

"Her hard work, drive to succeed, determination to persevere, recognition of the value of mentoring in her life and dedication to mentoring young women are truly remarkable and make Ami a worthy recipient of the graduate scholarship," says Dr. Jayati Ghosh, professor and associate dean in the Barowsky School of Business.

Ami was encouraged to attend grad school at Dominican by a Dominican alum, Mike Davis, who is a colleague at Charles Schwab.

"It has been rewarding to be a part of the graduate cohort this year, and I count it as one of the best decisions I've made," Ami says.

During her first year at Dominican, Ami's decision was validated during a strategic operation class – Supply Chain and Sustainable Operations – when she watched a Ted Talk by business strategist Michael Porter.

"In it he described how most people tackle social problems by setting up a non-profit organization, which would then focus on raising awareness and funding for the issue," Ami recalls. "The problem with that model is that every year non-profits have to be very creative about how to continue funding their solution, which is sometimes very difficult. Instead, Michael Porter suggested that businesses should be the ones to solve social problems because fundamentally business is the process of meeting a need at a profit. He called it focusing on the triple bottom line. From that moment, a light bulb went off in my head. If I could find a way to use my finance background to solve social problems, in a sustainable way, it would be a rewarding and exciting way to grow in my field and give back to the community."

Mekdi's path to Dominican was dramatically different. She was the first person from her high school in Ethiopia to be selected to attend college in the United States. She chose California, she says, because it is

the prominent state in the financial field and Marin County is also economically one of the strongest regions in the nation.

At Dominican, Mekdi is seeking a dual concentration in [finance](#) and [accounting](#) with a math minor. With her Dominican education, Mekdi plans to start her own venture capital firm in the Bay Area and would like to serve as a mentor for women who have an interest in finance and in the financial services industry.

“The Barowsky School of Business has prepared me to launch my career. For that I thank the faculty members,” Mekdi says. “I have received much appreciated support from my professors at school, including the Associate Dean of the business school.”

While at Dominican, Mekdi has received recognition on the Dean’s List and, for three consecutive years, the prestigious [Trustee Scholarship](#). Mekdi utilized her leadership skills in the community as Co-President of the student [Rotary Club](#). She also serves as an active member of the [Dominican Accounting and Finance Association](#).

“Finance puts Mekdi at ease and it is her passion,” Dr. Ghosh says. “She is very hardworking and is open to challenges and seeks opportunities to excel. She has a strong desire to learn and to be mentored by leaders in the field. The FWSF will provide her this opportunity.”

“I enjoy traveling, and think it is a vital way to learn about the world and to gain perspective on the business environment elsewhere,” Mekdi says. “I believe understanding the lives of people from different parts of this planet is the key to a globalized world. I aspire to be the upcoming business leader in that integrated world. Hence, I have traveled to Europe, and importantly, many areas of the United States. These experiences have definitely expanded my business acumen.”